

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LUSAKA 02325 291611Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----090547 291618Z /43

P R 291542Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8766
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUSAKA 2325

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS PBOR BC RH
SUBJ: RHODESIA-BOTSWANA BORDER CLASH

REF: GABORONE 1983, GABORONE 1975

1. DURING MOST RECENT GRAHAM/LOW VISIT TO SALISUBRY, LTG PETER WALLS, COMMANDER OF COMBINED OPERATIONS, DESCRIBED TO GRAHAM HIS VERSION OF THE CLASH ON THE RHODESIA-BOTSWANA BORDER LAST WEEKEND (REFTELS) BETWEEN ZIPRA AND THE RHODESIAN FORCES. ACCORDING TO WALLS, ABOUT 100 ZIPRA PERSONNEL CROSSED THE BOTSWANA BORDER INTO RHODESIA NEAR PLUMTREE JUNE 23. A RHODESIAN LYNX OVERFLEW THEIR POSITION, WHEREUPON THE ZIPRA FORCE RETREATED ACROSS THE BORDER AND APPEARED TO BEGIN SETTING UP FOR AN ATTACK, WITH THE NEWLY FORMED EX-GUERRILLA "SECRET ARMY" AS THEIR APPARENT TARGET.

2. WALLS SAID THAT HE TOLD MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE ABOUT THE SITUATION AND SUGGESTED THAT THEY ASK THE RHODESIAN FOREIGN
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OFFICE TO CONTACT BOTSWANAN AUTHORITIES TO INFORM THEM OF THE MATTER. ACCORDING TO WALLS, THE BOTSWANANS SENT A DEFENDER TO OVERFLY THE ZIPRA POSITION AND ALSO DISPATCHED SOME GROUND UNITS TO THE AREA. WHEN THE ZIPRA UNIT CONTINUED PREPARATIONS FOR ATTACK AND PROBED ACROSS THE BORDER ONCE AGAIN, THEY WERE ENGAGED ON A SMALL SCALE BY THE RHODESIAN UNIT. THE ZIPRA FORCE THEN RETREATED BACK INTO BOTSWANA.

3. WALLS TOLD GRAHAM THAT HE BELIEVED THE ZIPRA RETREAT
IN LARGE PART WAS DUE TO THE BOTSWANAN SURVEILLANCE AND
INTERVENTION. HE SAID HE WAS PLEASED AND GRATIFIED AT THE
WAY IN WHICH BOTSWANA HANDLED THE INCIDENT.

LOW

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: BORDER INCIDENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 29 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LUSAKA02325
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780269-0545
Format: TEL
From: LUSAKA
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978068/aaaaagit.tel
Line Count: 68
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: f503c68c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 78 GABORONE 1983, 78 GABORONE 1975
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2429325
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RHODESIA-BOTSWANA BORDER CLASH
TAGS: MOPS, PBOR, BC, RH
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f503c68c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014